



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/advancing-gender-equality-through-food-security-tajikistan>

Advancing Gender Equality through Food Security in Tajikistan



USAID

U.S. Ambassador Susan Elliott (center) attends a ceremony to open the Navruz Water Users Association in Tajikistan.

Investing in women and girls has long been a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy.

As Secretary of State John Kerry said in an [op-ed](#) earlier this year, “No country can get ahead if it leaves half of its people behind. That’s why the United States believes gender equality is critical to our shared goals of prosperity, stability, and peace.”

A growing body of evidence consistently tells us that when women are empowered to participate fully in their communities, countries as a whole are more likely to thrive. Unlocking women’s potential in the places where they are still marginalized and undervalued is one of the best strategies we have to address the world’s most urgent challenges.

One important way the United States supports gender equality is through [Feed the Future](#), the U.S. Government’s global hunger and food security initiative.

With a focus on smallholder farmers (those farming the smallest plots of land, the majority of whom are women), Feed the Future supports partner countries in developing their own agriculture sectors to significantly reduce poverty, hunger, and undernutrition. Studies [show](#) that if women farmers had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 percent and reduce the number of hungry people by 100-150 million.

In Tajikistan, a [Feed the Future focus country](#) where I serve as U.S. Ambassador, I’ve seen firsthand the serious obstacles to food security, but also the great potential for women to lead in the fight against hunger. In a country still recovering from civil conflict and rebuilding its economy after decades under the Soviet Union, many people struggle to access even the basic land and water needed for a healthy agriculture sector that can feed families and drive economic growth.

But these problems are solvable, which is why Feed the Future is supporting policy reform, promoting innovative technologies and good nutrition, and improving the capacity of Tajikistan’s private sector and civil society to sustain long-term progress.

As we work with the Government of Tajikistan and other partners to take on these challenges, we recognize that women need an equal place at the table if we’re going to succeed.

So when Feed the Future works to [improve land rights for women](#), we rely on local leaders like Nodira Sidykova, director

of a legal aid center that has helped countless Tajik women fight for their rights to farm their land. We hope women will follow the example of Uguloy Abdullaeva, who chairs a water users association that manages a local irrigation system for farming, and that they will seek positions of leadership in their own communities. And we know our efforts to combat undernutrition need the expertise and commitment of people like Khursheda Isaeva, who coordinates nutrition education through a Feed the Future program that trained 1,000 women in 50 villages in Tajikistan in the last two years alone.

Even though Tajikistan is a small country, when I hear the stories of inspiring women who are creating positive changes for future generations, it reminds me that the United States' work in Tajikistan is part of something bigger: [the vision](#) of a world where people no longer face extreme poverty or hunger, and where every woman and girl can [reach her full potential](#).

This post originally [appeared](#) on the U.S. Department of State blog.